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# Distributive and Partisan Politics in the U.S. Senate: An Exploration of Earmarks

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In recent years, members of Congress have engaged in a rapidly accelerating drive to garner particularistic benefits for their constituents, much to the dismay of many observers and budget hawks. While critics, most of whom watch from the outside (Senator John McCain being a notable exception), decry the annual practice of inserting into appropriations legislation line items that fund projects back home, members realize the value of their efforts in this regard. As Mayhew (1974) observed, such activities reap electoral rewards in the form of credit-claiming opportunities. Thus, it is no surprise that the practice continues largely uninhibited despite both popular and elite-level criticisms.

With the ubiquity of pork-barrel spending being a hallmark of the modern Congress, scholars have sought to explain the distributional mechanisms that allocate funds across states and districts. Most of these accounts focus on certain types of programs or categories of earmarks (funds designated for a specific purpose). Our aim in this chapter is to consider more fully the potential for party effects in the distribution of pork in the upper chamber of the U.S. Congress across a wide spectrum of policy areas.

At first glance, the Senate, with its more collegial leadership style and distribution of power, is perhaps not a strong candidate for exploring questions related to majority-party advantage. However, it occupies a position in the sequence of the appropriations process that offers unique opportunities to add to or undo actions taken in the lower chamber (Fenno 1966), and the must-pass nature of appropriations legislation likely makes it an appealing vehicle for partisan advantage. To the degree that senators find particularistic policies an attractive means of gaining electoral advantage for themselves and their party, there is reason to expect the majority party to profit from pork.

If majority status matters, the effect of changes in party control is likely to manifest itself in pork-barrel politics. Indeed, as the Democrats returned to majority status following the Jeffords switch in 2001, parties stood to gain or lose significant resources even in the area of pork-barrel spending based on their majority or minority status. News coverage of the appropriations process following James Jeffords's switch in party caucus indicated that Senate Democrats, upon assuming the reins of the Appropriations Committee, initiated a dramatic shift in spending that saw their constituents benefit at a very high rate, while their Republican counterparts in many cases witnessed a steep decline in project funding.[1]

While the Jeffords switch illustrates the importance of majority control, this chapter systematically examines the extent to which the majority party in the Senate is advantaged in the accrual of pork. If the party in control of the Senate has an advantage, we would expect it to garner a disproportionate share of the pork dollars to be distributed.

We begin with a review of the literature on distributive and partisan theories before turning to more recent efforts at explaining congressional earmarks. We then describe the data and methods employed in our analysis, and present descriptive and then multiple regression results accounting for the role of parties, institutional status, and other factors in the allocation of pork. The final section concludes and offers some extensions for future research.

## Distributive and Partisan Theories of Politics

Where does the "politics of pork" fit when we think about the major theories of congressional organization? One school of thought, distributive theories of lawmaking, would argue that pork-barrel projects should be evenly distributed among representatives in order to facilitate the lawmaking process. Conversely, theories that argue that party plays a consequential role in deciding legislative outcomes might suggest that the majority party should receive the greatest share of pork dollars. Below, we will argue that when it comes to the Senate and its unique set of rules, there should be enough pork for everyone to take a share, but members in the majority party, as well as those holding key leadership positions, should bring home more bacon than members of the minority party. Although the Senate is generally considered more collegial than the House, the majority party maintains enough of an institutional advantage that it can win this spending game.

### Distributive Politics

Distributive (or gains-from-exchange) theories were developed by Weingast (1979), Weingast and Marshall (1988), Shepsle and Weingast (1987), Fiorina (1977), Ferejohn (1986), and Mayhew (1974). In short, they posit that the internal operations of Congress are designed to promote the distribution of policy benefits to electorally important constituencies.

These theories suggest a state of the world where the committee system exists in order to facilitate logrolling across issue dimensions and helps to solve the collective-action problems inherent in a legislative body where members want to vote with their districts in order to get reelected (Mayhew 1974; Arnold 1990). If members are placed onto (or select) committees that best represent their constituents' interests and then report bills to the floor dealing with that specific jurisdiction, then other noncommittee members will vote with that committee since it does not harm them (or their reelection chances) because of the multidimensionality of issues. For example, members from the Agriculture Committee will support the opening of military bases as long as it does not harm agricultural interests, and vice versa. Further, in an important addition to distributive theories, Weingast and Marshall (1988) argue that since committees have gatekeeping power over their specific policy area and members have control over their committee seats via the seniority rule, logrolling will be institutionally supported.[2]

Shepsle and Weingast (1981a) develop a formal model to explain the universalism inherent in distributional politics that results from members' uncertainty over who will be part of future winning coalitions. Their model tries to resolve the difference between the minimal-winning-coalition arguments made by Buchanan and Tullock (1962) and Riker (1962) and the empirical reality of universalism common in various issue areas such as rivers and harbors (Ferejohn 1974), tax loopholes (Manley 1970), private bills (Froman 1967), and categorical grants-in-aid (Mayhew 1974).

Shepsle and Weingast (1981a) predict universalism, and they argue that it still applies in a partisan world. If parties are strong and members are certain of remaining in the majority in the future, then universalism should be spread across all members of the majority party, not just a minimal winning coalition within the party. However, if members are uncertain about remaining in the majority party over the course of their careers, or parties cannot enforce discipline, they may prefer a more universalistic mode of distributing benefits.[3] This may be the case in the Senate, where party leaders do not have the powers present in the House. Although many policy

areas are supported by small, intense coalitions (Stein and Bickers 1995), they need the support of a majority (or in the case of the Senate, a super-majority), so the universalism approach may still hold.

### Partisan Politics

In contrast to the distributional theories of lawmaking, Cox and McCubbins's cartel model (1993, 2005) and the conditional party government theory of Rohde (1991) and Aldrich and Rohde (1998, 2000b, 2001) posit a partisan theory of lawmaking in the U.S. House.[4] Cartel theory tells us that the key to legislative success in Congress lies in controlling the agenda. Parties act as procedural cartels by exercising negative agenda control to assure that no legislation reaches the floor that could possibly split the party or move the status quo in ways that are unfavorable to the party. To make certain that such legislation does not receive a floor vote, rank-and-file members are expected to support the party on procedural votes in exchange for the possibility of securing a more powerful position in the institution and increasing the probability of maintaining (or achieving) majority status.

Conditional party government argues that party strength is conditional on internal party homogeneity and external heterogeneity between the two parties. When both conditions hold, rank-and-file members cede power to the leadership so the party can "encourage" members to act in ways to further the party's goals. One way to stay in favor with the leadership is to vote with the party when needed on important legislation. If sending money to districts, or states, improves the chances of winning reelection (Mayhew 1974) and hence remaining in the majority, then parties will have reason to make sure the bulk of the goods go to their districts.

Balla et al. (2002) try to bring together the two broad classes of legislative organization theory and find that the *likelihood* of receiving a pork-barrel project is distributed evenly between the majority and minority parties but that the majority enjoys an advantage in the *dollar amount* of earmarks. This finding does help to reconcile the universal theories of distributive politics with the results of majority-party advantage put forth by others (Levitt and Snyder 1995; Carsey and Rundquist 1999; Lee and Oppenheimer 1999; Lee 2000). The results are consistent with the theory that the majority party can insulate itself from being blamed for a lack of fiscal restraint if both parties are guilty of spending money on local concerns. Yet the majority maintains an advantage by spending more on their constituents than the minority.

Interestingly, Balla et al. find that partisan advantage appeared to be associated only with the lower chamber, not the Senate. This finding of no party influence in the Senate, the authors argue, is consistent with the literature that describes a weak party system in the Senate (Ripley 1969; Sinclair 1989; Smith 1989). Since the authors caution that their test is limited to one type of pork in a single policy area—academic earmarks—we feel it is important to revisit the null finding in the Senate and look across a broader set of pork-barrel projects for majority advantage.

### Majority Advantage in the Senate Appropriations Process

We build upon the work of Balla et al. (2002) to develop our theory and hypotheses with regard to the distribution of pork in the Senate, and, like them, we take as our starting point two competing sets of theories. The first set, which will stand as our null hypothesis, suggests that legislators should receive pork in a universalistic fashion, with something for everyone. Members of Congress will logroll across the various subsets of policies in order to assure funding for their specific set of preferred projects. In contrast, other theories assume a role for political parties in the distributive-politics game. If the reelection rates for elected officials who bring home more goods for their district are higher, then the majority party has an incentive to make sure its members obtain, on average, more than the minority party. In short, we use the distribution of pork-barrel spending as a test of majority-party strength. If parties are "strong," then more pork dollars should be allocated to members of the majority party.

How does the majority maintain its advantage in the Senate? The search for party effects is more complicated in the upper chamber (Campbell, Cox, and McCubbins 2002). Unlike in the House, where the majority can use the Rules Committee to dictate outcomes (Cox and McCubbins 2005), the Senate majority party must turn to other tools and procedures to achieve the desired results, such as the motion to table (see chapter 8 in this volume, by Chris Den Hartog and Nathan W. Monroe). At each stage of the appropriations process, we argue, the majority party is able to keep more of the pork dollars for its own members because of various procedural maneuvers.

First and foremost, the appropriations bills are must-pass legislation, since failure to pass the bills would cause a government shutdown.[5] Efforts by the minority to filibuster the appropriations bills would therefore not be desirable, since the minority would likely be portrayed by the majority as obstructionist.[6] In fact, the bills usually pass by large margins in both chambers.

At the initial subcommittee and committee markup stages, where pork projects could be added, the majority party, by definition, has a majority of the votes, so it should be able to shape the legislation largely as it sees fit. Majority members have the power of the gavel at both levels, so they have an advantage when it comes to calling witnesses and scheduling times for markup. Although this may appear minor, the ability to schedule votes or markups at the discretion of the chair makes it difficult to catch the majority off guard in the hope of winning an occasional vote.

If minority committee members do prove difficult, they could easily be bought off with their own pork projects.[7] Once members of the subcommittees and full committees are content with legislation, then working the bill through the floor should be easier, since a winning coalition should exist between the majority party and the minority-party members who serve on the Appropriations Committee. If this is indeed the case, we should expect to find that members who serve on the Appropriations Committee from either party should receive more pork compared to their colleagues. However, members from the majority party on the committee should obtain more than minority-party members.

During the next stage of the process, legislating on the floor, the majority continues to hold an advantage. Although any member can offer amendments on the floor, the majority has the use of the motion to table in order to kill any amendments offered by the minority. This motion is not open to debate, so it becomes useful for the majority in stifling minority attempts to add additional earmarks. As Crespin and Monroe (2005) have demonstrated, the majority party is nearly always successful in the use of the motion to table. If necessary, the majority leader can also use the right of first recognition to fill the amendment tree (see Schiller 2000b). Given the majority party's advantage at each stage of the process, we expect it to receive a disproportionate share of pork dollars.

## Data and Method

To examine the influence of partisan, institutional, and electoral factors on the allocation of distributive outlays in the Senate, we employ a compilation of pork projects identified by the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW). Since 1991, CAGW has released an annual report of the pork-barrel projects contained in the (typically) thirteen appropriations bills that fund the various activities of the federal government. According to CAGW's definition, "a 'pork' project is a line-item in an appropriations bill that designates tax dollars for a specific purpose
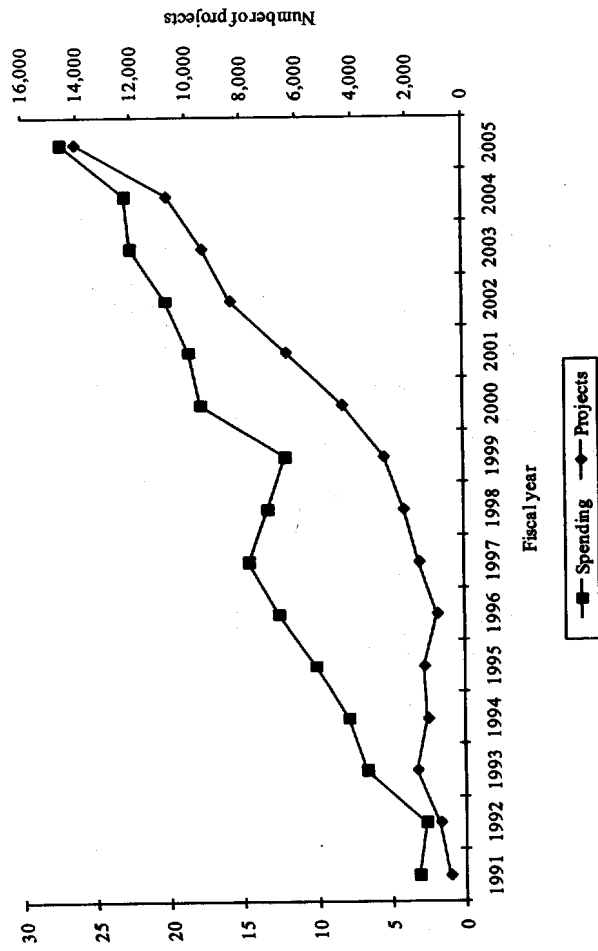
Fig. 12.1: Spending on pork projects and number of projects, 1991–2005

in circumvention of established budgetary procedures." In order to be included in the annual report, a project must meet at least two of the following criteria: it must be requested by only one chamber of Congress, not specifically authorized, not competitively awarded, not requested by the president, far in excess of the president's budget request or the previous year's funding, not the subject of congressional hearings, or serving only a local or special interest.[8] In practice, every project identified by CAGW meets the last criterion, so that what distinguishes the various projects is the way in which they are added outside of the conventional appropriations process.[9] CAGW is careful to note that theirs is not a comprehensive list of earmarks, as earmarks, which designate funds for a specific beneficiary or locality, may or may not be included via established budgetary procedures. Only earmarks that are inserted outside the established rules are categorized as pork.

Numerous observers have described the significant growth over recent years in the number and scope of pork projects. This trend is clearly borne out in the data compiled by CAGW. Figure 12.1 depicts the annual trend in the number of projects and the total dollar value for fiscal years 1991 through 2005, both of which exhibit high rates of growth during the period.

Each project identified is coded according to its status in the legislative process—more specifically, whether it was inserted into the legislation at

the request of only the House or the Senate, whether there was a budget request for the project by the administration, whether the project was inserted at the conference-committee stage, or some combination of these. A unique aspect of this data and our analysis, then, is our ability to parse out chamber-specific effects. While previous studies have examined the overall distribution of pork, we are able to investigate the effects of Senate-specific factors in the allocation of pork to states within the Senate appropriations process exclusive of what occurs in the House or in conference. For each fiscal year, we created a summary measure of pork at the state level: the total dollar value of all pork projects inserted via Senate action. This continuous measure will serve as our dependent variable in the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis to follow, although we will present some other data descriptively as well.

Additionally, we estimate models of total pork added in the Senate via the various appropriations bills. In describing the typically appellate role played by Senate appropriators, Fenno (1966) notes the more accommodating nature of the process in the upper chamber, and the attempt to help members with particular funding requests. Subcommittee chairs are also afforded substantial leeway. As Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991) argue, even in what scholars used to consider the bastion of the "guardianship" model—the House Appropriations Committee—there is evidence that committee and subcommittee party contingents represent their broader caucus. This is not to say that the politics of the Senate Appropriations Committee is a purely universalistic or partisan process, however. It may well be the case that evidence of partisan deck-stacking will be more pronounced in certain issue areas than others—perhaps along the lines of how much pork is available for distribution. As Marshall and Prins (1999) observed, conflict and partisanship vary across the appropriations subcommittees.

**Descriptive Measure of Pork**

For figures 12.2 to 12.5, we divide the states into five categories of ten states each and display measures of pork over our period of study, 1995–2005. The first two figures contain all pork-barrel projects, while the second pair show only pork added in the Senate. The darkest states are those that received the most pork (either total or per capita), with gradations down to the states that received the least amount.

Figure 12.2 presents the total amount of pork per state over the entire time period. As one might expect, large states such as California, Florida,



Total Pork in $10,000
- $12,511 - 65,000
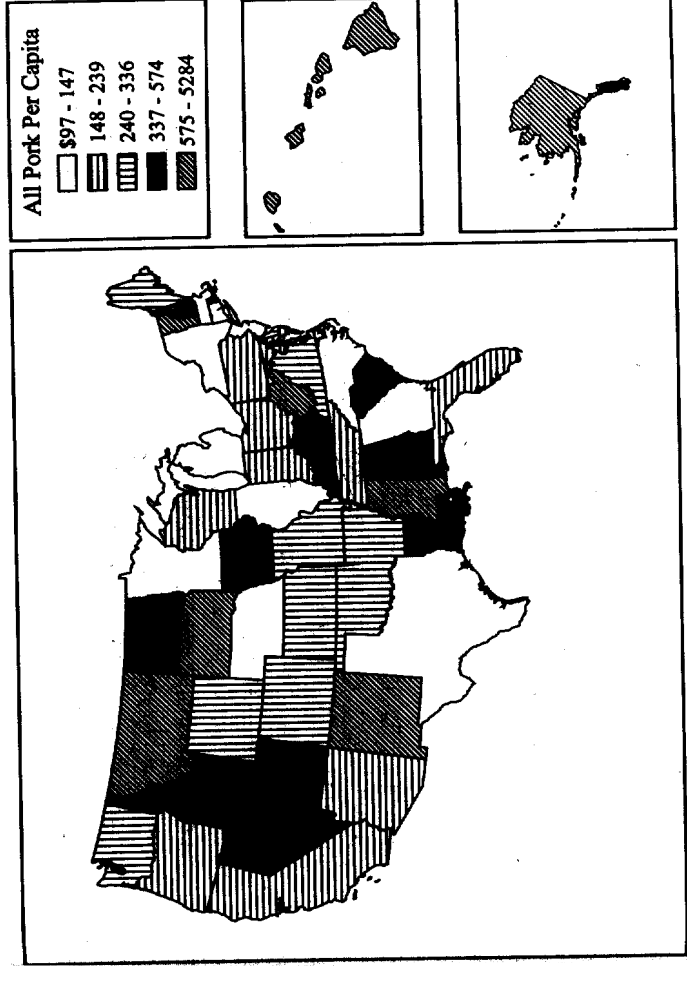- 65,001 - 92,000
- 92,001 - 120,000
- 120,001 - 200,000
- 200,001 - 501,553
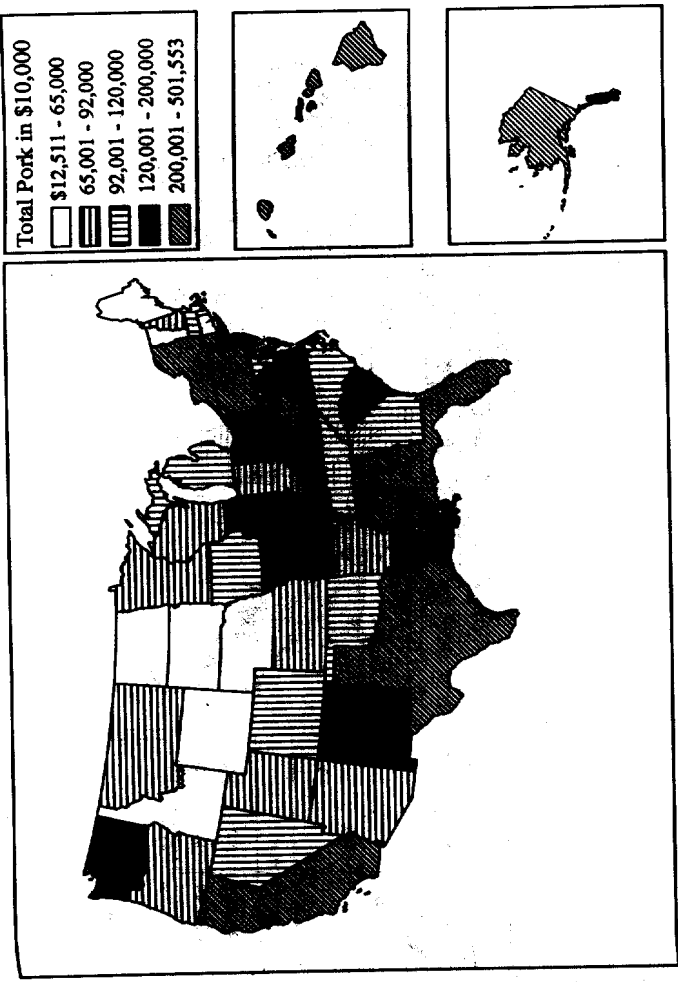
Fig. 12.2: Total pork dollars, 1995–2005



All Pork Per Capita
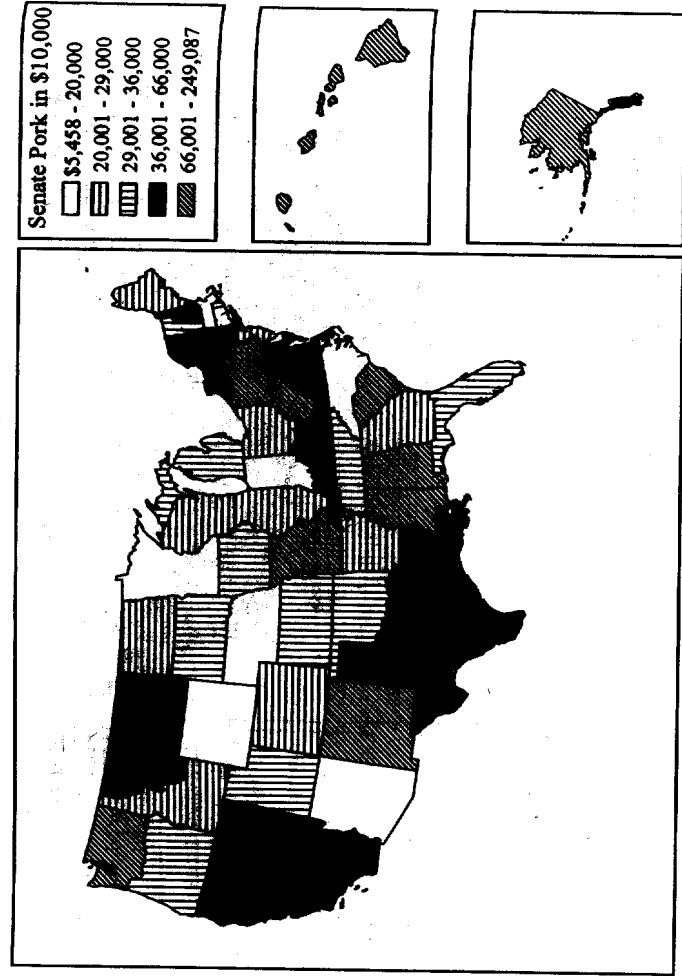- $97 - 147
- 148 - 239
- 240 - 336
- 337 - 574
- 575 - 5284

Fig. 12.3: Total pork per capita, 1995–2005

Texas, New York, and Pennsylvania receive a substantial amount of pork-project money. In contrast, small states such as North and South Dakota, Vermont, Maine, and Wyoming fall on the other end of the scale. Some states may seem out of place in the rankings, though. Mississippi's sizable share of pork can potentially be attributed to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R–MS), who likely collaborated with fellow Mississippian and senior Republican appropriator Thad Cochran. Also, Alabama, Alaska, and Hawaii received a great deal of pork. Much of Alaska's money was probably due to Republican senator Ted Stevens's chairmanship or ranking position on the full Senate Appropriations Committee, along with Alaska Republican Don Young's position as chair of the House Transportation Committee. Finally, Hawaii received a great deal of pork, especially defense dollars, probably because of the large number of military establishments in the state and because Daniel Inouye (D–HI) was the senior Democrat on the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

A small-state advantage is better displayed in figure 12.3, which shows per capita pork for each state. Alaska, Mississippi, and Hawaii remain in the top group and are joined by Montana, South Dakota, West Virginia,



Senate Pork in $10,000
- $5,458 - 20,000
- 20,001 - 29,000
- 29,001 - 36,000
- 36,001 - 66,000
- 66,001 - 249,087

Fig. 12.4: Total Senate pork dollars, 1995–2005

New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Vermont. Of these new states in the top category, all but New Mexico and West Virginia were in the bottom two groups of states for the previous category. Further, California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas have now shifted from the top category to the bottom two groups. Alaska is the winner in the per capita pork game. During our period of study, more than $5,200 per person found its way back to the northernmost state. Michigan is the biggest loser in the per capita pork battle, receiving less pork per person than any other state, a sparse $97. Since small states tend to be in the top categories and larger states in the lower groups, there is some evidence to suggest that small states are advantaged in the distribution of pork-barrel projects.[10]

When we look at total pork that is added in the Senate only (see figure 12.4), the results are similar, but not identical, to those in figure 12.2. Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are in the top group of pork-receiving states. West Virginia is the home state of the Senate Appropriations Committee's most senior Democrat, Robert Byrd. However, California, Florida, New York, and Texas are no longer in the top quintile and are replaced by Missouri, New Mexico, South Carolina, and
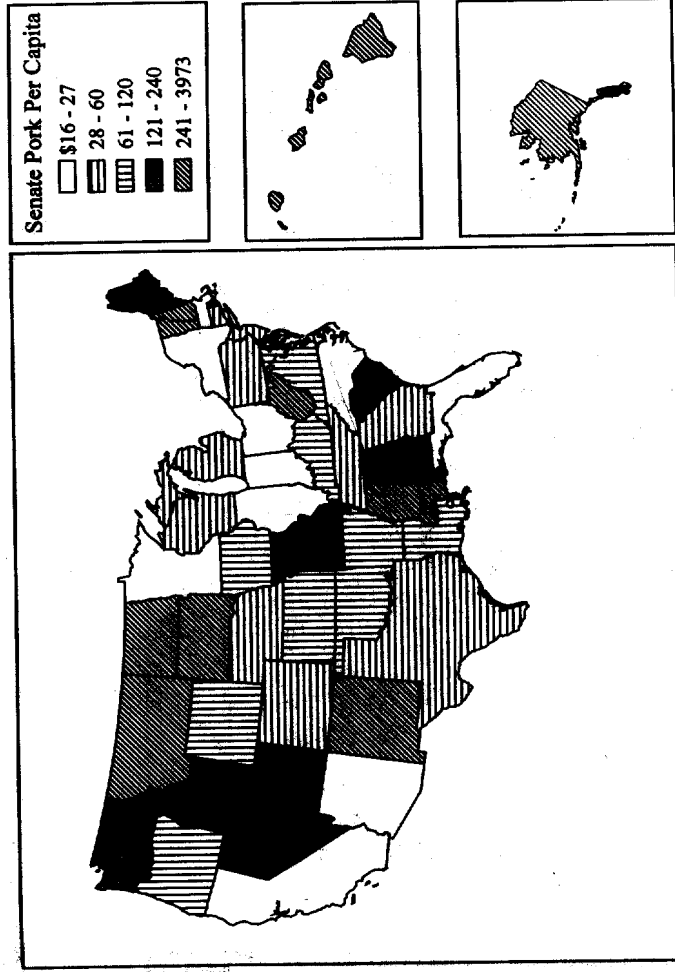


Senate Pork Per Capita
- $16 - 27
- 28 - 60
- 61 - 120
- 121 - 240
- 241 - 3973

Fig. 12.5: Total Senate pork per capita, 1995–2005

16 percent at the conference stage. In some years, more dollars were added in the House than in the Senate; but in only one year, 1995, did pork dollars added in conference outpace either of the two chambers. This suggests that if members are being bought off with projects, fewer are getting their pork at the end of the process.

Figure 12.7 shows the distribution of dollars by delegation type for only those projects that senators added for their states. The upper portion of the figure represents states that had two minority senators in the delegation, the middle portion represents states with a split delegation, and the lower portion represents states with two senators serving in the majority party.[11] For every fiscal year except 1997, states with a majority-party delegation received a plurality of pork dollars. On average, states with a majority delegation received 21 percentage points more pork than states with a minority-party



■ Minority delegation
□ Split delegation
■ Majority delegation
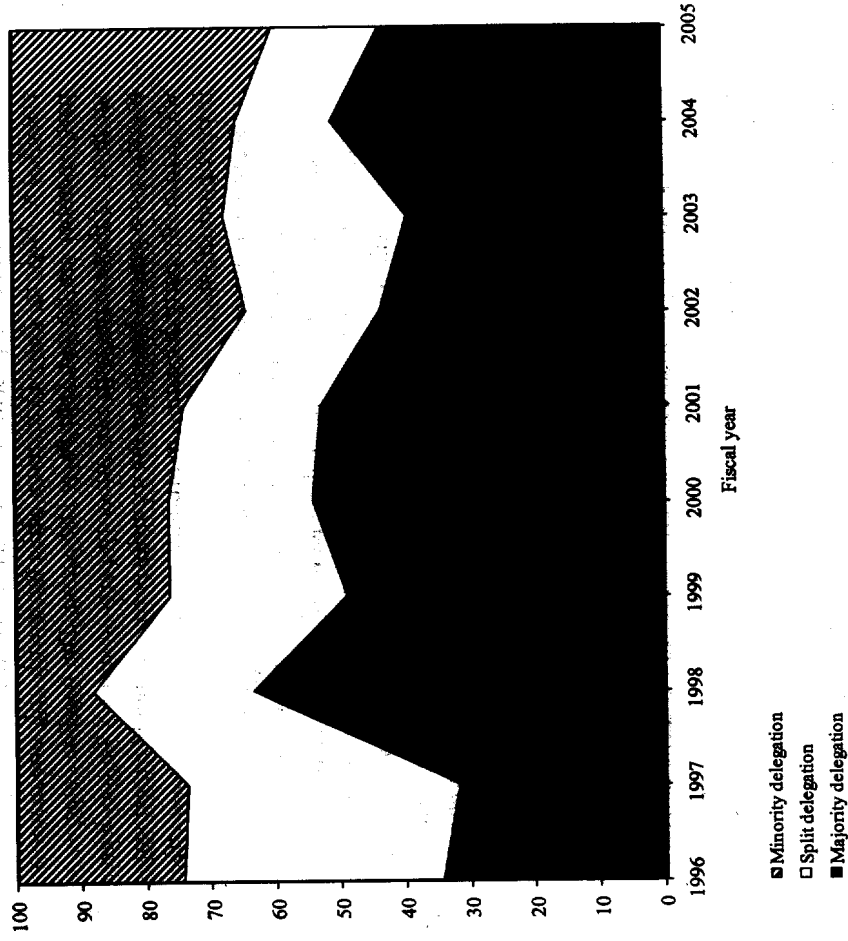
Fig. 12.7: Senate delegation differences in pork distribution
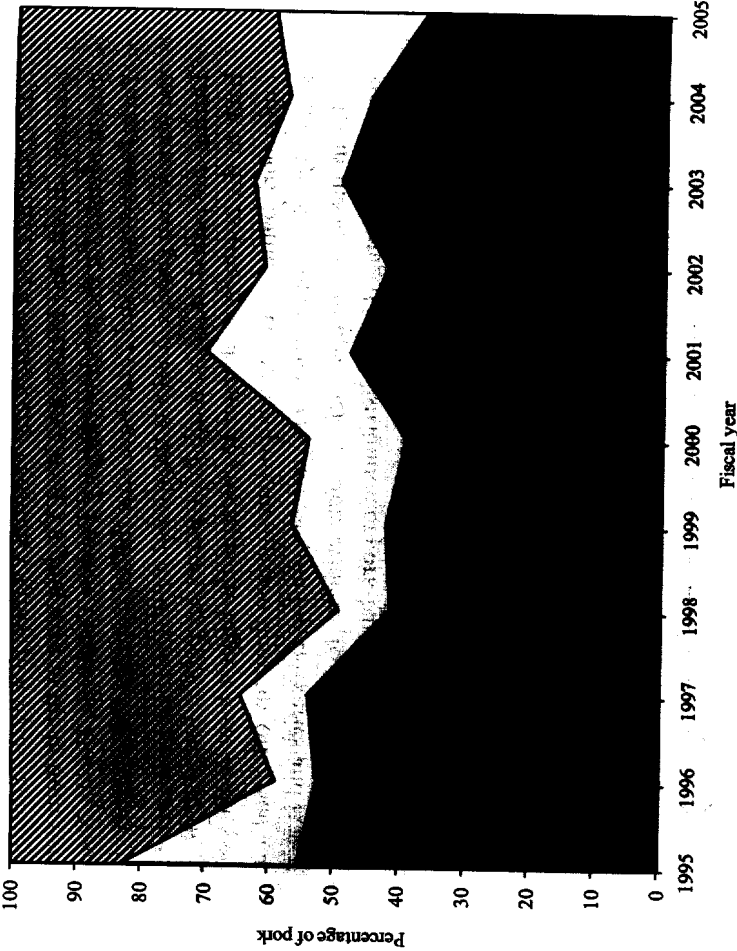


Percentage of pork

■ House
□ Conference
■ Senate

Fig. 12.6: Chamber differences in pork distribution

Washington. In the bottom quintile, we still see smaller states such as Wyoming and Rhode Island, but also medium-size states such as Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Indiana.

Finally, figure 12.5 displays the per capita pork added in the Senate. From this figure, the clear small-state advantage persists, as the single-district states of Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont are all in the top category. Meanwhile, California, Florida, New York, and Texas, the four largest states, are all in the bottom two groups.

Next, figure 12.6 displays the distribution of pork dollars based on where they were added in the appropriations process—in the House, the Senate, or conference. Over the entire period, the bulk of the pork dollars came from projects added before the conference committee, with 46 and 38 percent of the dollars added in the Senate and House, respectively, and only

delegation. This difference was greatest in 1998, with 64 percent of pork going to states with two majority-party members and only 12 percent of pork dollars being spent in states represented by the minority party only. This figure suggests there may be a majority-party advantage in the Senate.

## Systematic Results

Having presented a descriptive picture of some of the dynamics of pork distribution in the Senate, we turn next to a more systematic analysis. Based on the expectations described earlier, our models include measures capturing a number of factors predicted to influence the amount of pork obtained by a state. Of primary interest are the variables relating to majority-party status. To measure the degree to which the majority party receives a disproportionate share of pork, we examine the status of the Senate majority party within a state using two variables. States with two senators in the majority party are classified as *Majority-Party Delegation*, while those with only one majority-party member are labeled *Split Party Delegation*. The baseline category is made up of those states with two minority-party senators.[12] To the degree that there is a general benefit for the majority party, we should expect states with a majority-party delegation to produce a positive and significant effect in pork production.

Because members of the Appropriations Committee are in an advantageous position to steer pork back to their states, we expect them to garner considerably more pork than their colleagues who are not seated on the committee. Members of the majority party who chair the full committee or one of its subcommittees should fare better than ranking minority members and backbenchers, respectively, to the degree that partisan and organizational accounts explain pork allocation. In light of this, we measure the effect of holding certain positions with the following variables: *Appropriations Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Appropriations Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member, and Appropriations Member*.[13] Similarly, party leaders are likely to accrue benefits from the pork-barrel process. In the cartel perspective, this benefit may be an inducement for internalizing the costs of organizing the party. To capture leadership effects, we code *Senate Party Leader* as 1 for states represented by either of the party leaders or party whips.

In addition to the partisan and institutional variables, we consider the potential role of the electoral cycle. One might expect a senator who is up for reelection to be more active in the quest for credit-claiming opportunities. The variable *Up for Reelection* is a dichotomous indicator for a state in which a Senate seat will be contested in the next election. This measure

is interacted with a majority-status indicator in order to capture whether there is a majority-party senator up for reelection in the next cycle: *Up for Reelection (Majority)*. Additionally, because some have predicted that the majority party will be more likely to exclude the minority from the benefits of pork as the majority's margin increases and it feels more secure in its majority status, we control for *Majority Party Size*, which is simply the number of seats held by the party in power. The *State Population* measure accounts for the potential for pork distribution based on variation in state size. Finally, the models include year fixed effects to control for any year-to-year changes.

The first column of table 12.1 presents the results of our OLS analysis of total funding at the state level for pork projects inserted via the Senate appropriations process, across all subcommittees. The variables of primary interest relate to the majority-party status of the state delegation as well as the partisan nature of key positions of institutional power. We find support for the hypothesis that majority-party members fare better than their minority counterparts. In particular, states with two majority-party senators receive about $14.7 million more in pork than states with two minority-party senators (the baseline category). Split delegations are not statistically distinguishable from minority-party delegations.

Continuing with partisan factors relating to committee status, the home state of the Appropriations Committee chair garners approximately $157.5 million more in project funds than its non-committee majority-party counterparts, while states represented by the ranking member of the full committee bring home approximately $61.2 million more than states without a seat on the committee. The difference in favor of the chair relative to the ranking member is in this case statistically significant at $p = 0.054$. Finally, states with a senator who chaired one of the Appropriations subcommittees or sat as the minority ranking member accrued $49.8 million and $35.4 million more, respectively, than states that lacked membership on the committee. This amount for subcommittee chairs is on top of the extra money they receive for being a member of the majority party.

States with a senator in the party leadership also received an additional bonus of approximately $44.2 million. The variables measuring electoral effects (e.g., whether a senator from the state was up for reelection) do not obtain significance at conventional levels, nor does state population.[14] However, there is a systematic relationship between the size of the majority party and the amount of pork that gets distributed among the states. For instance, an increase of two seats in the majority party's margin carries with it an increase of about $30 million in pork per state.

TABLE 12.1. Fiscal distribution of pork projects among the states, by subcommittee, 1996–2005

TABLE 12.1. continued

| Variable | All | Agriculture | Commerce | Defense | Energy | Interior | Labor/HHS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Majority-Party Delegation | 1468.92* | 15.93 | 136.18 | 1009.87* | 211.13 | 107.45* | -13.95 |
| | (704.88) | (26.74) | (104.10) | (583.36) | (204.16) | (45.57) | (44.61) |
| Split Party Delegation | -466.21 | 13.47 | -.70 | 53.83 | 221.21 | 127.74 | 84.00* |
| | (576.73) | (28.83) | (67.80) | (223.2512) | (235.49) | (77.71) | (46.15) |
| Appropriations Chair | 15747.37* | -74.84 | 759.15 | -2404.67 | 1042.01 | 1451.48* | 311.91 |
| | (3958.56) | (206.73) | (1137.16) | (3192.18) | (1048.37) | (850.15) | (436.14) |
| Appropriations Ranking Member | 6117.34* | -596.22 | -2742.42 | -3709.96 | -767.28 | -292.37 | -245.24 |
| | (3046.08) | (372.97) | (2018.53) | (3696.90) | (1830.30) | (1179.06) | (728.83) |
| Appropriations Member | — | 46.97* | 179.11* | 81.10 | 44.81 | 83.69* | 25.75 |
| | | (17.71) | (89.00) | (178.51) | (92.42) | (49.94) | (24.42) |
| Subcommittee Member | — | 114.88* | 52.98 | 1572.73* | 555.39* | 216.38* | 116.16* |
| | | (44.78) | (140.43) | (596.67) | (304.30) | (48.69) | (54.95) |
| Subcommittee Chair | 4978.99* | 356.95* | 2142.85* | 8210.18* | 292.39 | 610.12 | 64.99 |
| | (843.00) | (96.85) | (497.17) | (3509.49) | (417.13) | (439.91) | (127.78) |
| Subcommittee Ranking Member | 3539.17* | 513.74* | 1967.24* | 13422.79* | 2273.08 | -345.72 | 279.31 |
| | (620.39) | (264.54) | (619.85) | (4424.43) | (1703.64) | (496.58) | (328.82) |
| Senate Party Leader | 4420.74* | 144.68* | 70.62 | 3656.12 | -57.75 | 98.21 | -46.36 |
| | (2398.49) | (75.18) | (93.54) | (2265.03) | (218.81) | (60.47) | (32.453) |
| Up for Reelection | -493.36 | -13.23 | -6.18 | -174.65 | 124.90 | -88.81 | -8.67 |
| | (748.44) | (27.32) | (90.76) | (528.28) | (188.90) | (70.42) | (38.35) |
| Up for Reelection (Majority) | -1186.72 | -19.69 | -198.72* | -373.65 | -89.53 | -100.62 | 9.77 |
| | (805.70) | (27.01) | (102.87) | (591.62) | (170.82) | (71.12) | (41.90) |
| Majority Party Size | 3003.22* | -23.46 | 351.36* | 989.58* | 252.11* | 213.85* | 223.44* |
| | (700.98) | (18.14) | (63.27) | (489.17) | (65.22) | (46.03) | (41.56) |
| State Population | 5.18e-06 | -4.44e-06* | 6.93e-06 | -.000015 | .0000185* | 9.14e-06 | 3.87e-06 |
| | (.000033) | (1.42e-06) | (5.47e-06) | (.000012) | (6.64e-06) | (5.86e-06) | (2.56e-06) |
| Constant | -160652* | 1341.03 | -18913.64* | -53652.45* | -13872.4* | -11575.5* | -11891.2* |
| | (37294.8) | (977.02) | (3411.85) | (26079.22) | (3476.30) | (2484.87) | (2209.20) |
| N | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| $R^2$ | 0.327 | 0.321 | 0.393 | 0.241 | 0.189 | 0.361 | 0.296 |
| F-statistic | 12.42* | 8.48* | 8.71* | 2.28* | 4.73* | 8.33* | 6.38* |

Until now, we have largely focused on all of the pork projects for a fiscal year together. However, as discussed previously, there may be differences across the various subcommittee bills in terms of the amount of pork dollars. This fact is made clear in figure 12.8, which displays the total amount of pork coming from thirteen of the fourteen Appropriations subcommittee bills that can be credited to a particular state from 1995 to 2005.[15] The Transportation Subcommittee distributes the greatest share of pork dollars, followed by Defense and

Military Construction. There is almost no pork in the Foreign Operations, Legislative Branch, and Homeland Security bills, and the other subcommittees fall somewhere in between. Although there tend to be many Agriculture pork projects, they are relatively inexpensive compared to defense-related projects.

Since there appear to be differences in the amount of pork coming from each of the bills, we turn next to an exploration of the majority-party advantage inherent in each of the subcommittees. Our working assumption

TABLE 12.1. continued

TABLE 12.1. continued

| Variable | Legislative | Military Construction | Foreign Operations | Transportation | Treasury | VA/HUD | Homeland Security |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Majority-Party Delegation | .86 | 217.17* | 1.18 | 452.64* | 18.46 | 180.48* | -3.03 |
|  | (1.21) | (88.61) | (1.31) | (148.63) | (60.73) | (50.99) | (4.71) |
| Split Party Delegation | -.78 | 50.37 | -.71 | 177.87 | 13.38 | 84.37* | 27.56 |
|  | (.78) | (78.63) | (1.07) | (115.70) | (34.48) | (39.77) | (18.05) |
| Appropriations Chair | 21.28 | 1450.33* | -2.39 | -1610.21 | -313.13 | -2824.30* | -128.42 |
|  | (23.57) | (879.80) | (2.98) | (1604.98) | (372.23) | (444.10) | (86.89) |
| Appropriations Ranking Member | 45.82 | 405.07 | -1.97 | -8694.30* | -743.10 | -6741.33* | -237.69 |
|  | (50.92) | (1409.37) | (4.94) | (2345.85) | (712.41) | (785.01) | (167.86) |
| Appropriations Member | -2.21 | 53.08 | .08 | 518.03* | 36.56 | 356.95* | 10.58 |
|  | (2.47) | (66.00) | (.24) | (113.67) | (34.89) | (38.46) | (7.98) |
| Subcommittee Member | -1.17 | 386.71* | 1.02 | 223.33 | 72.80 | 139.11* | 19.65 |
|  | (1.29) | (119.37) | (1.47) | (161.89) | (127.08) | (51.67) | (19.70) |
| Subcommittee Chair | -.73 | 1294.63* | 20.56 | 2085.53* | -43.06 | 1071.94* | -23.36 |
|  | (1.94) | (255.16) | (20.42) | (1173.63) | (125.44) | (339.03) | (19.83) |
| Subcommittee Ranking Member | 2.03 | 1396.10* | -.75 | 1636.81* | -12.58 | 462.15* | — |
|  | (2.92) | (249.84) | (1.30) | (691.33) | (184.10) | (174.85) |  |
| Senate Party Leader | .12 | 755.09* | -4.18 | 31.46 | -43.04* | 178.80* | -7.98 |
|  | (.60) | (125.57) | (3.59) | (143.64) | (23.33) | (80.56) | (8.98) |
| Up for Reelection | -.57 | -40.03 | .71 | -70.78 | -9.81 | -39.23 | 14.79 |
|  | (.52) | (76.88) | (.86) | (122.54) | (37.73) | (36.75) | (9.81) |
| Up for Reelection (Majority) | 6.19 | -128.24 | .33 | -139.40 | -32.14 | -41.35 | -8.84 |
|  | (6.10) | (99.13) | (1.94) | (180.20) | (44.95) | (55.95) | (9.82) |
| Majority Party Size | .25 | 270.53* | 1.99 | 355.56* | 24.77 | 360.00* |  |
|  | (.39) | (93.03) | (1.87) | (87.52) | (36.39) | (40.78) |  |
| State Population | 9.29e-08 | -4.14e-06 | -2.98e-08 | .0004* | 1.49e-06 | 1.36e-06 | 3.47e-07 |
|  | (7.39e-08) | (5.02e-06) | (2.95e-08) | (.0001) | (1.93e-06) | (2.10e-06) | (3.37e-07) |
| Constant | -13.75 | -14043.39* | -106.20 | -19411.12* | -1259.56 | -19423.22* | -11.65 |
|  | (20.78) | (4977.37) | (98.74) | (4732.53) | (1901.69) | (2189.82) | (8.36) |
| N | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 400 | 500 | 100 |
| $R^2$ | 0.038 | 0.367 | 0.087 | 0.533 | 0.044 | 0.587 | 0.141 |
| F-statistic | 0.12 | 11.22* | 0.11 | 13.78* | 1.26 | 32.34* | 0.27 |

* $p < 0.05$; one-tailed test. Year fixed effects are not reported. Estimates are OLS coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is dollars awarded (in tens of thousands of dollars).

is that the majority party will take more of the pork for itself when there is more pork to divide. In certain cases, the jurisdiction of the subcommittee does not lend itself particularly well to large earmarks. For instance, we consider agriculture to be a prototypical distributive issue area, yet much of the distribution that occurs in this area is through programmatic subsidies and does not appear to show up in sizable earmarks.

In order to estimate the majority party's advantage when it comes to the individual appropriations bills, we employed nearly the same regression

specification presented in the first column of table 12.1. The model includes measures for committee and leadership status, reelection, majority size in the chamber, and population. We also control for state representation with Appropriations Member and Subcommittee Member for the particular panel being estimated in the model. As with the preceding results, the model is

estimated with year fixed effects and robust standard errors. Because the main variable of interest has to do with the majority-party status of state Senate delegations, we chose to present the coefficient estimates, along with the 90 percent confidence intervals, in a figure as well as alongside the full results that appear in the table.

As figure 12.9 demonstrates, those committees distributing the largest share of pork projects also tend to be the ones most impacted by the partisanship of state delegations. The four bills with the largest amount of pork dollars—Transportation, Defense, Military Construction, and VA/HUD—all reveal a partisan tenor in the allocation of pork dollars among the states. We also found significant majority-party advantage for the Interior bill. In two instances, Labor/HHS and VA/HUD, we find that split delegations have an advantage over minority delegations, too. In no instance do states represented by a minority delegation do better than those with one or both majority-party senators.

These results also enable us to see that the Appropriations chair takes earmarks out of the Interior and Military Construction bills but actually
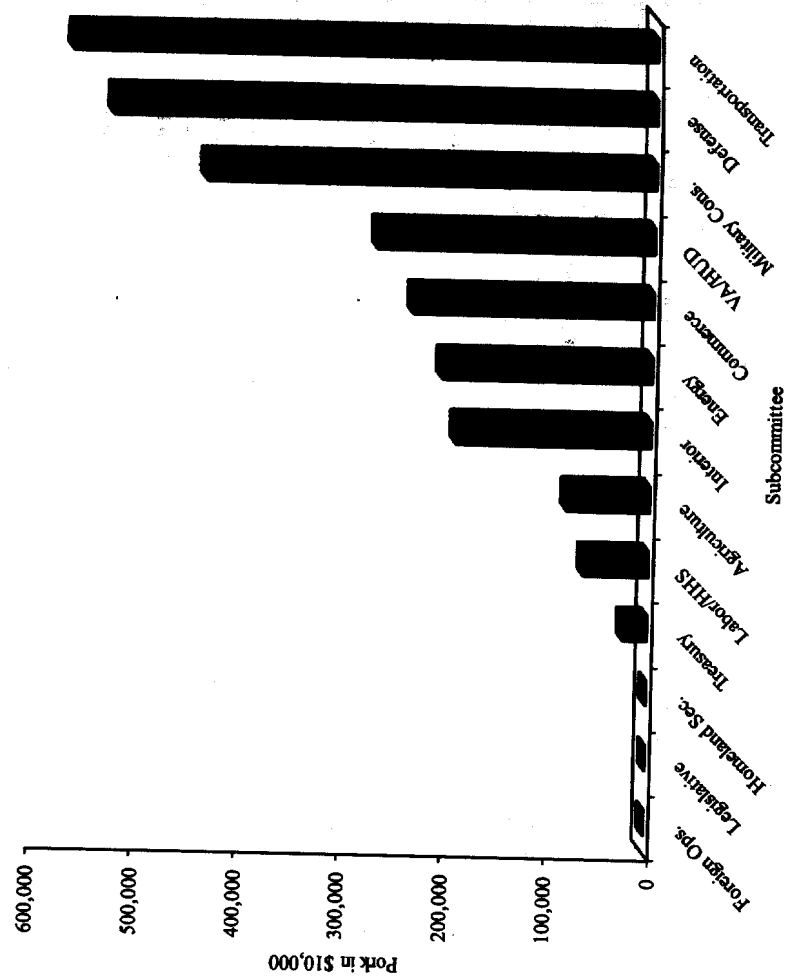
does much worse on the VA/HUD bill. This finding is probably a result of particular state concerns, rather than partisan politics. Although states represented by the Appropriations ranking member get more pork overall, it does not appear to be coming from any particular bill. We find, too, that in many cases, subcommittee chairs, along with ranking members, do particularly well, as we would expect. States with a senator who serves on the relevant subcommittee also do well in terms of earmarks.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we began with the notion that the majority party should have an advantage when it comes to the distribution of pork. Since bringing home bigger projects should help members get reelected, the majority party should receive a disproportionate share of pork dollars. Because the majority party possesses certain institutional advantages, it ought to be able to ensure that pork is distributed more or less how it sees fit.

Employing a data set that measures where pork was added in the legislative process, we were able to test these hypotheses and found results consistent with our theory. The majority party maintains an advantage when



Fig. 12.9: Majority-party coefficients and confidence intervals by subcommittee



Fig. 12.8: Appropriations subcommittee differences in pork distribution

it comes to pork dollars. While previous research was not able to uncover evidence of partisan advantage in the Senate, by looking across a broader range of pork-barrel projects, we demonstrated that majority-party advantages are present not just where previous studies have found them (in the House), but also in the Senate. This result is important because it is not specific to any particular policy area. While we do not find the advantage on each of the appropriations bills, the majority party on average does better, and in no case does the minority party have an advantage.

In the future, we hope to explore in greater detail the process by which pork is added to appropriations bills. We also think it would be useful to better understand the link between earmarking and election results.

## Notes

The authors gratefully acknowledge the able research assistance of Thom Hierl and helpful comments from the conference participants.

1. See, e.g., Alexander Bolton, "Senate Dems Wield Power, Feast on Pork," *The Hill*, September 5, 2001.
2. The seniority rule is no longer sacrosanct in the House, but it is still strong in the Senate. Krehbiel (1991) argued that the discharge petition-could be used to overcome committee gatekeeping powers. However, it is rarely successful.
3. See Wawro and Schickler (2004) for a test of universalism in the Senate.
4. Of course, partisan theories are not without their critics; see, e.g., Krehbiel (1993b, 1998, 1999).
5. In theory, the Congress could pass a series of continuing resolutions to keep the government running, but this is not a feasible long-term solution. Of course, the separate bills may be combined into omnibus legislation if so desired.
6. In the budget battles between Congress and President Clinton, this was not the case.
7. In a search for votes at this stage, we found only a handful of recorded votes, indicating that most bills passed by voice vote with a high degree of consensus.
8. This and much additional information is available from CAGW's Web site, http://www.cagw.org.
9. Something generally ignored in the study of distributive politics and pork projects (including this one) is the process of obtaining the projects. In the House and Senate, members formally submit requests to the different subcommittees, assigning a rank to each project. House members are limited in the number of requests they can make, but not senators. While we might imagine the earmark-request process as ad hoc, it is actually rather formal. Since members rank projects, there is likely a strategic element to the requests. We hope to explore this dynamic in future work.
10. In an alternative analysis, we tested the effect of state size on per capita dollars. The results indicate that as the state's population increases, it receives fewer per capita

dollars in pork projects. This result is consistent with Lee (2000) and Lee and Oppenheimer (1999), who argue that small states should be advantaged in distributive politics because they are cheaper to buy off than larger states.
11. One dynamic we plan to explore in future analysis is the relationship between same-state senators in the appropriations process, an issue touched upon by Schiller (2000a).
12. Our data do not allow us to disentangle which senator obtained a pork project. Since both of the senators from a state can claim credit for delivering pork, this coding scheme seemed appropriate. For our purposes, we are interested in exploring differences across delegation types, and we do not have a theoretical expectation that the payoff is proportional for each additional majority-party senator from a particular state—an assumption that would be necessary if we had one variable coded to measure the three delegation types. In fact, it may be the case that states with split delegations do worse than those with two minority members, as the minority members may work together to earn pork for their state better than would a split delegation.
13. In the model that includes all subcommittees, we do not include a separate indicator for simple membership on the committee, because nearly every member either chairs or sits as ranking member of a subcommittee. In an alternative model, we included the additional control variable of committee membership. This variable was not significant and exhibited classic signs of multicollinearity. However, for the subcommittee models, we do include a general Appropriations Committee membership variable.
14. We performed joint significance tests on the two reelection variables and failed to find evidence of a joint effect.
15. There was no pork added on the Senate side for the DC appropriations bill during the period of our analysis. The Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee was added in 2003, and in order to maintain the same number of subcommittees, the nonsecurity components of the Transportation Subcommittee were rolled into the new Transportation, Treasury Subcommittee's jurisdiction to form the new Transportation, Treasury, and General Government Subcommittee (see Paul Kane, "Stevens Relents on Homeland," *Roll Call*, February 26, 2003). For ease of presentation, and because the transportation bill encompasses much more pork than that of Treasury, we classified this committee under Transportation for the 108th Congress (fiscal years 2004–5).